

Articles:

- Baby on the way... (1)
- Every teacher's nightmare: Bible class with 40 squirming middle schoolers (1)
- New pastors, a new church, and new direction for the youth (2)

Prayer Concerns:

- Pray that during this busy time at school we can find time to rest together as a family.
- Thank God for this healthy pregnancy and pray that we continue to experience good health and strength through the next two trimesters.
- Pray that Aaron would have wisdom in managing large classrooms and in planning for his new religion courses.
- Remember Martín and Elsy as they venture into this new role as church planters. Pray that sufficient financial support would be found locally and abroad.
- Thank God for the good team of teachers at school this year, and that at least one new Mennonite teacher was hired.

News from the Kauffman family in La Mesa, Colombia

Top Ten Changes of 2007

As we began to write our first newsletter of the year, we realized there were too many things to write about in just two or three short articles. So instead we present this list as a summary of the many exciting changes taking place this year. Drum roll, please...

1. We are expecting a new addition to the family in September.

We are joyfully expecting a new baby in September. We are now beginning the second trimester and all is going extremely well! We found an OB doctor in Bogotá (someone highly recommended by MCC workers), who we immediately felt very comfortable with. Abby is starting to say "Mommy, baby in tummy" and seems excited, although she obviously doesn't understand the implications completely!

2. Laura feels more confident interacting with students.

As her Spanish language skills have improved over the past year, Laura has enjoyed more conversations with the Colegio students. She continues to work with the school chapter of the Red Cross. Two of the school's nursing students in 11th grade are co-leading refresher courses, and Laura will join them in a supportive role.

3. Aaron is teaching religion classes to middle schoolers.

Aaron expected to help shape the religion curriculum this year, since last year Otilia Garzón, an experienced Bible teacher, retired. He didn't expect to be asked to teach religion classes, though! Once a week he sees teaches Bible to the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students. He enjoys the challenge of planning exciting, meaningful lessons, and keeping the crowded classrooms (mostly) under control!



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During our holiday trip to the US we celebrated the wedding of Laura's sister Joanna to Clay Showalter.

4. The RAD program (Reaching and Discipling) is planning to send a team to La Mesa.

Calling all interested young adults (age 18-25) to serve with RAD in La Mesa! Plans are in the works to send a team down in November to work with the Colegio and ministries of the Mennonite Church. We are excited about the possibility of working closely with this team. For more information about RAD, visit www.radicaljourney.org.

5. Aaron is taking an online theology class from Eastern Mennonite Seminary.

While talking with his former Bible professor, Linford Stutzman, over Christmas vacation, Aaron found out about a new opportunity for EMU graduates involved in mission. They can apply to take online classes at Eastern Mennonite Seminary through the Samuel Grant, which covers the tuition. So Aaron took advantage of this new program and signed up for class on contemporary Anabaptist theology. He has enjoyed the disciplined reading and writing required by the class, as well as the interaction with students from all over the United States (and even one in Lithuania!).

Aaron & Laura
Kauffman

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*Trust in the Lord with all
your heart and lean not
on your own
understanding; in all
your ways acknowledge
him, and he will make
your paths straight.*

Proverbs 3:5.6

**Our Support Team
from
Zion Mennonite Church**

Chairperson
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Prayer Coordinator
Mark Mast

Church Communicator
Sharon Showalter

Finance Manager
Todd Stoltzfus

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We're on the Web!

See us at:

kauffmanhome.net

Back to school...



Top Ten Changes Continued

6. La Mesa Mennonite Church has a new pastoral couple.

Jaime and Mitzi Guevara arrived in February to begin their ministry as pastors at La Mesa Mennonite. They and their three children have been part of the Renewal Encounter Mennonite Church in Barranquilla, Colombia, a congregation started by fellow Mission Network missionaries Gamaliel and Amanda Falla. We are grateful that we had the chance to meet them when we visited their church on our vacation last summer. We appreciate the gifts they bring to pastoral ministry, and believe we will have a good relationship with them.

7. Martín and Elsy are planting a new church.

Our good friends Martín and Elsy González have officially stepped down from their role at La Mesa Mennonite, and were officially commissioned for a new church planting effort on Sunday, February 18, 2007. Actually, it isn't a completely new effort. They will continue the ministry they had been doing for three years with children and families in two marginalized neighborhoods of the nearby town of Anapoima. We will support them in their work by accompanying them two Saturdays a month, teaching Bible lessons, visiting families, and doing community health work.

8. The youth group elected a leadership team.

With the absence of Martín and Elsy in the youth group, we were concerned about having to assume more direct leadership of the group. Thankfully, already in the first month of the year the members of the youth group have shown greater initiative and ownership of the group. To build on their nascent

leadership capacities, we decided to elect a youth cabinet. Instead of choosing them by nomination and voting, we led them in a process of discernment that we had learned from Pastor Clyde Kratz of our home church, Zion Mennonite. On February 10th the group chose five youth to be part of the team in a process in which there were no losers and no hurt feelings. We look forward to working with them, as well as the new pastoral couple, Jaime and Mitzi.

9. Colegio Americano Menno has a new administrator.

To alleviate the load that Principal Guillermo Vargas has had over the last 15 years, the school hired an Academic Coordinator this year. Wilson Pacheco comes with lots of experience in curriculum planning, as well a good system for handling student discipline issues. The school also hired new teachers for Pre-first, Second, Spanish, and Philosophy. We are pleased with the team we have this year. Though only one of the new teachers is Mennonite, the other new teachers show a commitment to the school's values and mission.

10. The school has placed a new emphasis on English.

This year, students grades 6-11 have three periods of English a week instead of two. Aaron has his own full sized classes of 35-45 students. The school is also starting an intensive English club once a week. Ruth, Aaron and Laura will all be involved with the club to give the students more exposure to conversational English. The goal is to begin moving toward a bilingual program next year.